

Centre Piece for November Keys

I try to start Centre Piece on a very positive note and, as usual, I will manage it..... but only just! The Council is very appreciative of all those local residents who regularly pick up litter and dispose of it in a responsible way and I am sure you will all join the Council in saying a very big THANK YOU to them. If you would also like to help please contact me and the Council can supply you with a litter picker.



The 'but' is now coming..... There is a huge litter problem in and around the village with littering and not only that but in the emptying of the litter bins provided. I am sure we all want to make our local environment as beautiful as possible so please emphasise to all around you the importance of either putting litter in the bins provided or bringing it home, recycling where possible and disposing safely.

As an aside, a witness walking along the footway near the bus stop by the vicarage saw a car pull up and the occupant dump two or three bags of rubbish beside the litter bin (which at the time was not even full)!



This month it has been West Wood that has been particularly hit hard with litters, who even dismantled the bin, taking out the liners, pulling them apart and distributing them over the field as well as the contents. There has also been a spate of graffiti over the play equipment.

The Council is aware that there are bins being missed during the weekly collection and will, once again, be taking this up with the Borough Council who manage the contractors. They are also aware that two vandalised bins have yet to be replaced and are continually chasing this up too.

The positive news from the Council this month came via Kent Highway Services. As you will be aware the enhanced belisha beacons on the zebra crossing near to the Medical Centre have made the crossing far more visible and as a consequence safer and this is now being investigated for the other belisha beacons near to Riding Lane. Signage marking Foxbush as unsuitable for HGVs is also to be installed as is improved signage and other measures along Nizels Lane. Both of these should be completed well before the end of the financial year. Signage is being investigated for Watts Cross to make it safer for children crossing from the school bus, and the following year more physical improvements will be investigated.

If you happen to live or pass by regularly the Parish Council street lighting do please give me a call if you notice a fault. These are situated in Noble Tree Road, at Vines Lane junctions and along the footpath between B245 and Park Avenue.

A problem brought to the Parish Council this month was that of the Library continuing to be closed. In fact the Council has ascertained that this will be closed until 1 May 2021 at least. Opening will depend on the state of the pandemic and funding at that time. The problem many residents are experiencing is that of unreturned library books because the drop box is blocked off and many are unable to travel to Tonbridge Library to return them, or to go on line and extend the return date.

The Parish Council is pressing for a resolution to this problem and an information notice on the library door. Hopefully by the time you read this the resolution will be in place.

As the rain poured down recently flooding has been very much to the fore of Councillors', flood wardens' and residents' minds in low lying areas. The Council's Emergency Flood and other Emergencies Plan is currently under review and flood wardens have been offered the opportunity to attend virtual training. Investigations are also underway into more effective means of communication between the wardens and the Council during a flood event. You may be able to help, if you see a blockage in the drainage system please to report it, if you can, on the KCC website 'report a fault' which is very user friendly, or by letting me know in order that I can report it.

Talking of blockages, the Hawden Stream was raising concerns in residents' minds as it had not been totally cleared earlier in the year. However, the good news is, that reports of Environment Agency staff have been on site and seen to be clearing it. If you have a drain/stream passing through your garden do not forget you are responsible for keeping it clear. If blockages are allowed to remain in place it may not be your property that is affected but your neighbour's so please do make that check today to ensure you do not fall out of favour with them!

During the meeting held on Wednesday 14 October, members looked to the future and agreed the way forward on the 3-Year Plan. After much discussion on what could be afforded during the coming financial year (2021/22) it was decided to concentrate on finishing off the Village Green improvements (details yet to be agreed) and replacing the storage facilities attached to the Pavilion. These have become very dilapidated with watertightness being a challenge so it was decided that more secure and user-friendly storage would be a great asset. Exact designs will be discussed early

As usual a member of the Parish Council will be present at the Farmers' Market on the second Tuesday of the month (10 November) if you have any comments or ideas to pass to the Council or you can contact me by email clerkhildenboroughpc@gmail.com or by phone 01732 832367.

Pam Gow

